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ABSTRACT

A follow-up telephone survey conducted in spring 1977 of 440 students who graduated from Prince George's Community College in career fields in May 1976 produced 382 contacts. Of the 282 (74%) who were employed, 262 (69%) were in a field related to their degree program. Of the remainder, 79 (21%) had transferred to another institution, 11 (3%) were unemployed, and 10 were neither working nor looking for work. Further in-depth interviews were conducted with 154 selected students concerning graduate goals, employment, and college transfer status. Of these, 128 reported a primary educational goal of achieving the Associate of Arts degree, 126 were employed in a new job after being a student, and most reported their degree program had provided them with the theory and skills needed for their work. Jobs had been secured through direct employer contact (24), family or friends (18), newspaper ads (15), college personnel (5), or an employment agency. These job search methods were similar to those reported in a national labor survey dealing with the methods, intensity, and effectiveness of job search approaches, which is reviewed in an appended report. Also appended are breakdowns of graduate responses by health, technology, and business career clusters. (RT)

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PRINCE GEORGE'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Report No. 77-17: How Students Are Using the Community College to Get Jobs: A Follow-up of Career Program Graduates

Introduction - The Problem of Preparing for Jobs and Careers

Employability of today's college graduates has to be understood in terms of the job market. Unlike factory-society workers before 1950, today's knowledge-society workers need considerable education and make many job changes. Some occupations (like bricklaying and dentistry) still imply a lifelong activity. But most workers today will have a number of different jobs during their employment career.

To avail themselves of *options* in a changing society, community college students might return to school several times for further education. Persons in their twenties preparing for computer science, for example, might come back ten years later for business administration or accounting. Variability and options are thus the keynote in today's job preparation activities. The way the student uses the community college and its credentials will depend on developing life stages of the student as well as developing needs of the economy.

The specific pathway to a career will depend on the field. Persons completing secretarial, dental assisting, or X-ray technology programs typically get entry jobs in that field. Accounting or data processing graduates often take stepping-stone jobs, unrelated to their studies, before they graduate. Many students in law enforcement or fire science already have a job in that field. There is thus no single way of using educational programs for achieving career goals. The variety of pathways needs to be understood if you are going to relate career program graduates to employment.

Scope, Limitations, and Method of This Study

The present report is therefore limited in scope. It considers only formal graduations in relation to employment. It does not describe the whole picture of how students are getting jobs. Follow-up of graduates involves two stages. A placement report is developed at the time of graduation, determining employment status in relation to major field. In the spring of the following year, a telephone survey determines further employment status and method of finding work.

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This report is based on a telephone survey of former students who graduated in career fields a year ago in May, 1976. Out of 440 career program graduates, it was possible to follow-up 382. Only 58 therefore were in the "status unknown" category. These 58 were not especially concentrated in the degree fields, except Police Science (12 of 48). The follow-up results are therefore taken to be highly reliable within virtually all degree categories.

It should be noted that the basic follow-up is mandated by federal regulations, through the State Department of Education, Division of Vocational-Technical Education. Additional questions in the form of a greater in-depth interview were added for selected students contacted by phone in the Spring of 1977.

General Findings

Of 382 responses available, 282 indicated that they were employed (74 percent). There were 262 employed in a field related to their graduate degree (69 percent). Another 79 were continuing there education at another institution (21 percent). Only 11 were unemployed (3 percent), while 10 were not in the labor force, i.e., they were neither working nor looking for work.

Health Cluster

In the Health Cluster, dominated mostly by Nursing, 169 of 197 were employed (86 percent), all but 5 in the degree field. Seventeen were continuing their education (9 percent). Only 5 were unemployed (3 percent), and another 5 were not in the labor force.

Technology Cluster

In the Technology Cluster, dominated by Law Enforcement, Computer Technology, and the Electronics Technician program, 57 of 104 were employed (55 percent) and 39 were continuing their education (38 percent), while 5 were unemployed (5 percent) and 3 were not in the labor force.

Business Cluster

In the Business Cluster, 55 of 81 were employed (68 percent), mostly in their field. Another 23 were continuing their education (28 percent). Only one was unemployed, and two were neither working nor looking for work.

In-Depth Interviews

For 154 selected students who were able to be contacted in a series of telephone interviews in March and April, 1977, additional information was solicited concerning graduate goals, employment, and college transfer status. The results of this data-gathering are summarized here.

Most of these students (128) had a primary goal of obtaining the A.A. degree as a result of attending PGCC. Only 7 declared personal growth a primary goal, and another 7 an increase in job skills. Twenty-two indicated no response, or "other."

There were 103 employed full time and 23 part time, while 28 were unemployed. Of the 126 employed, for most it was a new job after being a student (87).

Most reported that their program at PGCC had helped them to acquire necessary theory for doing their job (91), as well as the practical performance skills they needed (88). For 71, their program helped them get their job.

For the employed, their job locations were in P.G. County (43), D.C. (28), Montgomery County (16), Northern Virginia (5), or elsewhere (6).

They had found their present job through direct contact with an employer or personnel office (24), word from family or friends (18), newspaper ads (15), College personnel (5), or an employment agency (3). These responses reflected job search methods reported on the basis of national surveys (see Report No. 81, and Occupational Outlook article in appendix).

Open-ended Questions

Open-ended questions elicited the following kind of statement: "Of course I love my job, but I've only had it a few months and I appreciate it because it was hard to get." Those who had to settle for jobs unrelated to their field of study had the most to say in the form of evaluation or criticism about their program, mostly constructive in nature. Specific comments about particular curriculums are beyond the scope of this report, but will be referred to the appropriate divisions for their consideration and possible action.

Transfers

Of the 154 special interviews, 112 were not enrolled in a transfer institution, but 26 were enrolled full time and 16 part time. There were 24 at the University of Maryland, 6 at another Maryland college, and 9 out-of-state. Their present program was directly related to their PGCC program for 35. For 32 their PGCC program had prepared them well for further work, for 9 this was uncertain, but for none was their PGCC program a poor preparation. Twenty said they lost no credits in transferring, ten lost six or less, and five lost nine or more credits.

Conclusion

During a time when jobs are scarce and the job market is tight, the College appears to be fulfilling its mission of preparing its graduates for success in the job search process.

Paul Larkin, Director
Institutional Research Office

5/04/77

PRINCE GEORGE'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Employment Status of Spring 1976 Graduates in Spring 1977

A.A. Degree Program	Number of Responses	Employed in Field	Employed, not in Field	Continuing Education	Un-Employed	Other
HEALTH CLUSTER	*197*	*165*	*5*	*17*	*5*	*5*
Nursing	141	126	2	8	1	4
Dental Asst.	17	14	1	2	0	0
Mental Health	14	5	2	5	1	1
Medical Lab Tech	14	10	0	2	2	0
X-Ray Tech	11	10	0	0	1	0
TECHNOLOGY CLUSTER	*104*	*48*	*9*	*39*	*5*	*3*
Law Enforcement	36	13	6	14	0	3
Computer Tech	25	17	0	8	0	0
Electronic Engin. Tech	18	8	0	7	3	0
Civil Engin. Tech	7	3	0	3	1	0
Recreation Leadership	5	3	0	2	0	0
Drafting Tech	5	1	1	3	0	0
Electrical Engin. Tech	3	0	1	1	1	0
Mechanical Engin. Tech	2	1	0	1	0	0
Fire Science	2	1	1	0	0	0
Industrial Engineering	1	1	0	0	0	0
BUSINESS CLUSTER	*81*	*49*	*6*	*23*	*1*	*2*
Accounting	30	16	2	12	0	0
Business Management	28	16	1	9	0	2
Secretaries *	15	13	0	1	1	0
Marketing Management	7	3	3	1	0	0
Sec. Science - 1 yr. ctf.	1	1	0	0	0	0
GRAND TOTAL	*382*	*262*	*20*	*79*	*11*	*10*

* Includes all Secretarial programs: legal, executive, general & medical.

Source: Institutional Research Office.

4/19/77

How People Are Finding Jobs

Report No. 81

In view of the tight job market, the jobseeker needs information about effective ways to look for a job. The present report reviews a recent Labor Force study published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (August, 1974) concerning a nationwide survey of successful jobseekers. This 1973 survey tried to identify effective job search techniques. Highlights of the results are as follows:

(1) The most common jobseeking method was direct application to employers (without suggestions or referrals from anyone). Two out of three workers used this method. The next most frequent methods were: Asking friends, answering newspaper ads, and using the State employment service.

(2) Direct application was the most frequent way successful jobseekers had found their present jobs.

(3) Direct application to employers had the highest effectiveness rate.

(4) The methods most commonly used (and the method most frequently named as the one by which they obtained their jobs) were the same for men and women.

(5) One out of three jobseekers had turned down a job offer.

(6) Most jobseekers spent fewer than five hours a week looking for work.

METHOD OF OBTAINING JOBS

The respondents were asked to name the method most useful for getting their present job. The top ranking methods were direct application to

employers, asking friends about jobs, and following advertisements in newspapers. Among blue-collar occupations, many workers obtained their jobs by asking friends about jobs where they worked. Among white-collar workers, an important method for managerial and sales workers was answering local newspaper ads; for clerical workers it was private employment agencies. Among craftsmen who belonged to unions, many used the union hiring hall to get their jobs.

There were differences in search methods according to years of school completed. About half of those with an eighth grade education found direct application to employers most useful. But only about one-third of the high school and college graduates reported this method. The percentage of persons finding the State employment service most useful declined as years of schooling increased. The proportions indicating that private employment agencies were useful rose with education.

EFFECTIVENESS OF JOB SEARCH METHODS

The effectiveness of each job search method may be expressed as a mathematical relationship between using a particular method and getting a job by that method. The method with the highest effectiveness rate was application directly to employer--48 percent of all persons using this method got their job that way. This method was also the one used by the greatest proportion of jobseekers, as indicated earlier. Six other methods had effectiveness rates of about half that of direct application. These were: using private employment agencies, answering ads in local newspapers, asking friends about jobs where they work, using union hiring halls, using school placement offices, and asking relatives about jobs where they work. There was little difference

between men and women in the effectiveness rate of a given method, with two exceptions. Women found private employment agencies and Civil Service almost twice as effective as men did.

The effectiveness rates were different for blacks and whites. Blacks had greater success with community action groups, the Urban League, and the State employment service, less success with direct applications, private employment agencies, newspaper ads, and school placement offices. School placement offices, incidentally, were effective for professional and technical workers in particular, and private employment agencies were effective for clerical workers.

INTENSITY OF JOB SEARCH

The jobseekers generally spent relatively few hours a week looking for a job. About 66 percent reported they looked for five hours a week or less. About 20 percent looked for 11 hours or more. Women devoted fewer hours to job search than men. Amount of time distributions were about the same for white and black workers.

The jobseekers generally sought jobs at a relatively short distance from their homes. About four our of ten looked no farther than ten miles. Another three out of ten went up to 25 miles. Only one out of ten went over 100 miles. Men tended to go farther than women, whites travelled farther than blacks.

In summary, it can be noted that picking out an employer, and then going and asking for a job, tends to be an important way of getting that job. Much education and training may be thought of as a process of getting ready to ask. Where several methods are to be used together, direct application should surely be considered.

Paul Larkin, Director
Office of Institutional Research

TECHNICAL NOTES

This report was based on a Special Labor Force Report entitled "Job Finding Survey, January 1973" and published in August 1974. This was characterized as a preliminary report on a nationwide sample survey financed by the Manpower Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor.

The survey itself was conducted by the Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. It covered nearly 16 million wage earners who had started their current jobs during 1972. About five and a half million of these workers had not found it necessary to search for a job because they returned to a job they had held previously, they were offered a job without a search, they had entered a family business, and the like. of the 10.4 million who sought work, about half had been out of the labor force. The remainder had lost or quit jobs, or wanted a job change.

The persons who had looked for a job were asked to fill out a questionnaire. Questions were asked about the methods used to find work, the method most useful for getting the present job, the time spent and the distance travelled in looking for work. A summary table of some of the response categories is attached.

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9/13/74

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